

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T JIDDA 5623

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SA, IZ, SY
SUBJECT: SAUDI CHIEF OF STAFF'S COMMENTS ON IRAQ AND SYRIA

REF: JIDDA 2918

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE ROBERT MURRAY CALLED ON SAUDI CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL HUMAID ON JULY 30. GENERAL HUMAID WENT OVER FAMILIAR GROUND, VOICING SAUDI CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET PRESENCE IN HORN OF AFRICA AND NOW IN SOUTH YEMEN. HE SAID THAT SAG WAS PLEASED THAT USG NOW RECOGNIZED DANGER. MR. MURRAY ASSURED GENERAL HUMAID THAT U.S. WAS ALSO CONCERNED AND THAT USG WAS READY TO ASSIST SAUDI ARABIA IN INCREASING YAR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES. COMPLETE MEMCON BEING SENT THROUGH DOD CHANNELS.
2. DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION. GENERAL HUMAID OBSERVED THAT USSR HAD ALSO GONE THROUGH SERIES OF UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES IN AREA. HE SAID THAT SOMALIA, FOR EXAMPLE. HAD LEFT SOVIETS AND THAT IRAQ WAS ON THRESHOLD OF LEAVING AS WELL AS SYRIA.

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3. COMMENT: WHEN DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER PRINCE TURKI BIN ABD AL-AZIZ RECEIVES IMPORTANT AMERICAN VISITORS, GENERAL HUMAID USUALLY ATTENDS AND HE HAS FREQUENTLY HEARD TURKI SAY THAT IT IS SAG'S POLICY AND DUTY TO ASSIST NEIGHBORING ARAB STATES WHO NEED ALTERNATIVE TO DEPENDENCE ON USSR. ON ONE SUCH OCCASION, DURING VISIT OF NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE GROUP TO SAUDI ARABIA ON APRIL 17 (REFTEL SEE), PRINCE TURKI

TOLD GROUP THAT PRINCE SULTAN WAS IN IRAQ THAT VERY DAY. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT SAUDIS WOULD STAND BESIDE IRAQ, ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE THEIR BROTHER ARABS OF DANGER OF COMMUNISM AND POINTING OUT THE WAY TO SAFETY. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE FIND GENERAL HUMAID'S REMARKS ABOUT IRAQ (AND SYRIA) VERY INTERESTING. IT IS HARD TO TELL WHETHER HIS REMARKS REFLECT WISHFUL THINKING BROUGHT ON BY THE RECENT DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN IRAQ AND USSR OR WHETHER THEY REFLECT ANTICIPATION OF DESIRED RESULTS FROM A CURRENT SAUDI INITIATIVE.

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